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Written by Congressman John Adler, a member of the House Financial Services Committee and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, who represents parts of Burlington, Camden, and Ocean Counties

Like so many Americans, I spent the last few months talking with family members, friends, and neighbors about how we can improve our health care system. I have hosted nearly 50 community meetings, in Cherry Hill and across Burlington County, in order to hear from you and answer your questions about Washington's efforts to pass a health care reform bill. While I support several elements of H.R. 3200, the bill currently being considered by the House of Representatives, I do not believe it does enough to lower health care costs for middle class families and small businesses.

Fixing our health care system is one of my highest priorities. The status quo is unsustainable. But as important as it is to reform the system, we have to make sure Congress does it right. Sadly, the current bill under consideration by the House of Representatives is not the right bill for America.

More than thirty years ago, my father had his first heart attack. At the time, he owned a local dry cleaning business in Haddonfield and could not afford health care for himself or our family. Without health coverage, the medical bills were unaffordable for my middle-class family, and he was forced to leave the hospital and get back to work before he was ready. After three more heart attacks and expensive hospital stays, my father lost his business and died at the age of 47.

Three decades after my family struggled through the illness that took my father's life and closed our family business, American families are still being priced out of the system.

I want a health care bill that strengthens our economy and America's global competitiveness. H.R. 3200 takes some positive steps to increase access to health care, such as a self-sustaining public option, but it does not do enough to lower costs for families and small business owners, and keep those costs down in the long term. The Congressional Budget Office announced earlier this summer that the current bill would speed the growth of health care spending, with a projected cost of more than \$1 trillion over 10 years and add \$239 billion to the federal deficit.

Congress should not pass a reform plan that will increase our deficit, place an unfair financial burden on taxpayers and businesses, or leave our families and businesses to face continued escalating health-care costs.

We need to consider additional reforms that will improve the quality of care while also lowering costs. We can squeeze more money out of the system by eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse without having to raise taxes on working families or small businesses. We can change the philosophy around delivery of care by rewarding quality and not quantity. We should allow small businesses to join together to receive better health insurance rates, and allow health insurance plans to be sold across state lines.

Finally, we should make sure disabled and elderly Americans have access to long-term care insurance. Independent analysts found that long-term care insurance would keep individuals in their home longer (vs. a nursing home) and reduce the federal deficit by \$58 billion over 10 years.

We have a chance to solve monumental health care problems in our country. We need to make the hard choices and produce a sustainable long-term plan. I urge you to continue engaging in this debate, and pushing your ideas forward. I know I will continue my efforts to find reforms that will benefit hard working American families, seniors, taxpayers, and small businesses.